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NSC BRIEFING

23 February 1958

State Department, FBI reviews completed

Reaction Abroad to 20th Party Congress

I. Free world reaction

A. Western Europe

1. Prime Minister Eden in House of Commons on 27 February ridiculed as a "fantastic illusion" the Soviet suggestion that Communist power could survive a thermo-nuclear war.

2. Foreign Secretary Lloyd demanded Soviet deeds to testify to their peaceful intentions before the democracies could relax.

On other hand, Richard Crossman, an influential MP, sees a change for the better in the Soviet Union, stating that "it would be folly to rule out the possibility that the Russians have learned from Stalin's failures and now mean what they say."

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4. No other official reaction reported from Western Europe; press has reacted according to its political outlook.

B. Asia

1. Prime Minister Nehru told the Indian Parliament on 28 February that "great changes" were taking place in the Soviet Union. He said the shifts in the Communist line show that the USSR is moving toward

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"Some kind of normalcy, which is to be welcomed in every way."

1. no other official reaction reported from Asia.
2. Indian press gave top coverage to Khrushchev's speech; hailed it editorially as plea for peace, though Soviet self interest motivations recognized.
3. Japanese press reacted coolly toward statements at Congress (There is strong public support for Japan's position at the London talks and resentment at Soviet veto of Japan's UN membership bid).

C. Yugoslavia

1. Nothing to add to last week's report that Yugoslavs "pleased with developments" at Congress. No official comments.

D. Western Communist reaction

1. Togliatti, in an interview with UP correspondent published in Pravda, admitted that it was possible to achieve socialism in Italy by parliamentary means. He complained, however, that much of the "politically active population is not represented in the parliamentary majority" and emphasized that the first requirement is "to create a parliamentary majority."
2. One "well-known" American Communist leader has commented privately that, "under present conditions, the Communist Party, USA, will never admit publicly that a violent revolution will be necessary to achieve socialism in this country." (FBI Summary, 21 Feb 58) ✓

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3. Regarding France, there is nothing to add to last week's report.

II. Sino-Soviet Bloc reaction

A. European Satellites

1. No comment by officials concerning the Congress, though press and propaganda media have given complete coverage of proceedings. Editorials of controlled press have treated cautiously the Congress endorsement of "different roads to socialism" and denigration of Stalin.
 - a. Poles voiced indirect approval of "many roads to socialism" concept.
 - b. East Germans have indicated satisfaction with emphasis on "principle of collective leadership" at Congress.
 - c. According to American Legation in Budapest, some Hungarian Communists believe Congress repercussions will be felt in Hungary and Rakosi will be affected.

B. Communist China

1. No comment by officials as yet. A 19 February editorial in the Peiping People's Daily credited Khrushchev personally with having "creatively developed" Marxism-Leninism and observed that the Congress had given direction to "the entire international movement." This and two subsequent editorials in other controlled papers failed to reiterate attacks against

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Stalin in Congress speeches or to mention the
emphasis on "collective leadership."

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WORLD REACTIONS TO PARTY CONGRESS

I. In the UK, Prime Minister Eden (27 Feb) ridiculed Mikoyan's implication that Communist power could survive a thermonuclear war as "fantastic illusion."

A. Influential labor MP Richard Crossman stated "it would be folly to rule out the possibility that the Russians have learned from Stalin's failures, and now mean what they say,"

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B. Elsewhere in Europe, no official reaction has been reported. European newspapers have reacted according to their individual political outlooks.

II. In Asia, only comment from major leader to date has been Nehru's 23 Feb statement that "great changes" were taking place in the Soviet Union.

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A. Nehru told Indian Parliament that shifts in Communist line show USSR moving toward "some kind of normalcy, which is to be welcomed in every way."

III. French Communists are not yet recovered from shock of switched line, but Italian Communist boss Togliatti (in UP interview printed in Pravda) admitted Khrushchev-sponsored "possibility" of achieving socialism by parliamentary means.

A. He complained, however, that in Italy much of the "politically active population is not represented in the parliamentary majority," emphasized that the first requirement is "to create a parliamentary majority."

B. In this connection, although outside realm of foreign intelligence, Council may be interested in FBI report that one "well-known" American Communist leader has commented privately "under present

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conditions, Communist Party, USA, will never admit publicly that a violent revolution will be necessary to achieve socialism in this country." (FBI Summary, 21 Feb 56)

C. Editorials and controlled press of European Satellites press have treated Khrushchev's endorsement of "different roads to socialism" and Congress' deflation of Stalin with caution, or ignored them.

1. East Germans thusfar alone in endorsing "principle of collective leadership."
2. In Hungary, Congress attacks on the "cult of personality" are felt to be embarrassing to First Secretary Rakosi.

D. In Communist China, interestingly enough, press has been restrained.

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1. 19 February editorial in Peiping People's Daily credited Khrushchev personally with having "creatively developed" Marxism-Leninism, observed that Congress had given direction to "entire international movement."
2. However, neither this nor two subsequent editorials in other controlled papers endorsed Congress attacks against Stalin or mentioned Congress' emphasis on "collective leadership."